Sainik Schools

1304. SHRI RAMENDRA KUMAR : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) the details of the sainik schools set up during the last three years in the country, State-wise;

(b) whether not a single sainik school has been set up in the State of Bihar during the said period; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI N.V.N. SOMU) : (a) to (c). Since 1978, no new Sainik School has been opened in any of the States in the country.

Transit Facilities through Bangladesh

1305. SHRI SURESH KALMADI : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have requested Bangladesh to grant transit facilities for goods passing through that country to India's North-eastern States; and

(b) if so, the response of Bangladesh thereto?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL) : (a) The Government of India have been interested in securing multi-modal transit facilities through the Bangladesh territory to the North Eastern States and have taken up the matter with the Government of Bangladesh on a number of occasions.

(b) The Government of Bangladesh have not yet reacted positively to our proposals.

External Publicity

1306. SHRI PARASRAM BHARDWAJ : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) the steps being taken to revamp our external publicity departments functioning abroad so as to improve the country's image abroad and also to project our viewpoints more forcefully on sensitive and important issues;

(b) whether Government propose to appoint professionals for this purpose; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL) : (a) Several new steps have been taken to explain, interpret and project India's Foreign Policy objectives. These included the opening of MEA's Home Page on INTERNET; upgradation of our communications system with missions and posts abroad; use of modern publicity techniques and professional public relations; lobbying and advertising agencies; diversification and augmentation of channels of communications and mass media including projection through satellite television; and broad basing of publicity by involvement of no governmental and professional agencies. India's foreig and economic policies and specific initiatives in bo areas have been well received. The policy transparency combined with new initiatives on Kashm and human rights issues and their foreceful projectio abroad have contained Pakistan's propaganda again India on these issues. There has been a perceptib improvement in India's international image in the med and amongst the public abroad.

(b) and (c). The Government already emplo professional and professional agencies in th preparation and placement of its publicity material Such agencies are regularly used in the production publications, documentary or video films, feature articl on various subjects, public relation activities, advertisi and media strategy.

[Translation]

Four Laning of NH-24

1307. SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR : W the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased state :

(a) whether any proposal to convert the Delh Bareilly-Lucknow highway (National Highway-24) in four lanes is pending with the Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken/proposed to be taken by t Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SH T.G. VENKATRAMAN) : (a) to (c). The total length Delhi-Bareilly-Lucknow highway (NH-24) is 499 km. T portion of NH-24 from Delhi to Ghaziabad 28 km. length is already four lane. The remaining 471 k length is having 2 lane carriageway. 4 laning Ghaziabad-Hapur Section including Hapur bypa totalling a length of 32 km. is included in the 8th Fi Year Plan and the work is proposed to be executed w loan assistance from Overseas Economic Cooperati Fund (Japan). The loan agreement was signed in Fe 1995.

[English]

Blood Bank

1308. SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE pleased to state :

(a) whether any representations have been receiv from the State of Kerala for the issue of licences Blood Bank during 1996;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the number of licences issued to the applican

(d) the reasons for delay in granting licences to the remaining applicants; and

(e) the steps being taken by the Government to ensure early decision on the issue of such licences?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERVANI) : (a) and (b). A representation regarding delegation of powers to the State Government in the matter of issuing of licence Blood Banks was received from Minister of Health, Kerala on 16.10.95 and reply was also sent to the then Minister of Health, Kerala on 18.12.95. Subsequently, a copy of the same representation was again forwarded by Secretary, Health and Family Welfare, Government of Kerala to the Union Health Secretary on 3.5.96.

(c) and (d). Applications for issuance of licences to 41 Blood Banks were received by Drugs Controller General (India). Out of these, 36 licences have been duly approved; for the remaining 5 Blood Banks, licences could not be approved because of basic deficiencies observed due to non-compliance of various parameters as stipulated under Schedule 'F', Part - XII (B) of Drugs and Cosmetic Rules.

(e) There is no delay on the part of the Central Licence Approving Authority (Drugs Controller General India) in approving the licences. However, the Government proposes to strengthen Central Drugs Control Organisation for shouldering the new responsibilities vested under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act and Rules and also to expedite the disposal of the cases.

DTC Dying a Reject's Death

1309. SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Union Government have seen the newsitem captioned 'DTC dying a reject's death' appearing in the 'Indian Express', New Delhi dated April 13, 1996;

(b) if so, the facts of the matter reported therein and the reaction of the Government thereto;

(c) the steps being taken to rejuvenate the dying DTC;

(d) the considerations which weighed with the then Government in privatising transportation particularly in certain remunerative routes like '620' and host of others;

(e) whether Government will re-examine wholesale privatisation of transportation system in the Capital in the light of complaints received from commuters; and

(f) if so, when and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Although, the financial position of DTC is not satisfactory, it can-not be said that DTC is dying a reject's death as Government is making all out efforts to improve the financial position of DTC.

(c) The Government has taken following steps to rejuvenate DTC :

(i) Introduction of Voluntary Retirement scheme in DTC to reduce its surplus staff;

(ii) Ban on recruitment.

Besides this, Government is continuously monitoring the performance of DTC with a view to improve its functioning and the steps are being taken on continuing basis to increase productivity, reduce cost per km., enforce economic measures, prevent leakage of revenue by effective checking, rationalisation of routes with a view to increasing revenue collection and to reduce the cash losses.

(d) to (f). As the fleet of DTC could not be augmented mainly on account of financial constraints and it was not possible for the DTC to meet the increasing demands of transportation in Delhi, Private Bus System in Delhi was introduced by Transport Department of the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi to supplement the DTC operation. The Private buses were introduced on each routes in the ratio 40:60 alongwith DTC. Since the introduction of Private Buses was limited to 40% of the total requirement of city buses, the question to re-examine wholesale privatisation of transport system in the Capital does not arise.

Policy on National Defence

1310. DR. KRUPASINDHU BHOI : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether there has been a pressing demand since long for formulation of a long term policy on national defence and security;

(b) if so, whether there have been suggestions for setting up a national security council; and

(c) if so, the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI N.V.N. SOMU) : (a) India has a comprehensive strategic and security policy based *inter alia* on our threat perceptions and the global and regional security environment. This policy is continually under review, in the light of developments which impact on our national security, enabling Government to take all necessary measures to cope with any threat to the security of the nation.

(b) and (c). The National Security Council was set up on 24 August, 1990.